

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated April 19, 2007. Claims 1 to 5 and 11 to 24 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 11, 16 and 21 to 24 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 16 to 22 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 because the claimed invention is allegedly directed to non-statutory subject matter. In regard to Claims 21 and 22, Applicant has amended the preamble of these claims as suggested by the Examiner to clarify that the claims are directed to a computer-readable medium. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

In regard to Claims 16 and 24, these claims are directed to a process which the Office Action concedes is statutory subject matter. However, in the Office Action, it is contended that the Applicant is “in reality seeking patent protection for the computer program in the abstract” as evidenced by Claims 22 and 21, respectively. Applicant respectfully submits that a rejection on these grounds is impermissible as the argument presented for the rejection relies on incorporation of the limitations of Claims 22 and 21 into Claims 16 and 24, respectively, and then declares those incorporated limitations as supporting the conclusion that Claims 16 and 24 are directed to non-statutory subject matter. That such a rejection is impermissible is evidenced by the fact that no section or portion of either 35 U.S.C., 37 C.F.R., or the M.P.E.P were cited as providing authority for making such a rejection. Furthermore, no USPTO official guidelines or internal memorandum were cited in order to clarify the rejection so that Applicant can understand

the nature of the rejection. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection or, in the alternative, a citation to an appropriate authority in support of such a rejection.

Furthermore, as no citation to an appropriate authority has been provided, Applicant has interpreted the form of the rejection as relying on M.P.E.P. § 2106(IV)(C). As such, M.P.E.P. § 2106.IV.C.2(2) provides that a claim should be reviewed “to determine if it produces a useful, tangible, and concrete result. In making this determination, the focus is not on whether the steps taken to achieve a particular result are useful, tangible, and concrete, but rather on whether the final result achieved by the claimed invention is “useful, tangible, and concrete.”” Applicant notes that Claim 16 recites “a deletion step of deleting, if there is stored print data which should be deleted, the stored print data which should be deleted” and Claim 24 recites “deleting, if there is stored print data which should be deleted, the stored print data which should be deleted” each of which is a useful, tangible and concrete result. Applicant submits that deleting the stored print data is useful because it frees memory resources for storage of another print job, deleting the stored print data is tangible because it causes the state of a storage memory to change and deleting the stored print data is concrete as the deletion occurs only after certain states are reached within a printing apparatus.

Therefore, as Claims 16 and 24 include a useful, tangible and concrete result, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 16 to 20 and 24 are directed to statutory subject matter.

Claims 1 to 3, 5, 11 to 13, 15, 21, 23 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,535,294 (Arledge, Jr.) in view of U.S. Patent No.

6,089,765 (Mori). Claims 4 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Arledge, Jr. and Mori in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,438,433 (Reifman). Claims 16 to 20 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,348,972 (Taniguchi) in view of Arledge, Jr. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Turning to specific claim language, amended independent Claim 1 is directed to a printer controller for controlling printing of print data. The printer controller includes a storage unit adapted to store the print data and authentication information corresponding to the print data; an input unit adapted to enable a user to input authentication information to print the print data; a collation unit adapted to collate the authentication information input by the user with the authentication information stored in the storage unit; a display unit adapted to, after the user inputs the authentication information, display a list of print data corresponding to the input authentication information; a selection unit adapted to enable the user to select at least one print data from the list of print data displayed by the display unit; a control unit adapted to control the printing of the selected print data to be performed after confirming that a print charge for printing the print data selected by the user is paid; a check unit adapted to check whether it is a specific time specified by the user; a determination unit adapted to determine, in accordance with checking that it is the specific time specified by the user, whether each of the print data stored in the storage unit should be deleted in accordance with a specific condition; and a deletion unit adapted to delete, if there is stored print data which should be deleted, the stored print data which should be deleted.

Claim 16 is directed to a data processing method for providing a print service using an information processing apparatus for storing print data and authentication

information corresponding to the print data, and a printer. The method comprises a first transmission step of transmitting authentication information input by a user to print the print data from the printer to the information processing apparatus; a second transmission step of transmitting information identifying the print data corresponding to the input authentication information from the information processing apparatus to the printer; a display step of displaying, after the user inputs the authentication information, a list of print data corresponding to the input authentication information on a display panel of the printer in accordance with the information transmitted in said second transmission step; a third transmission step of transmitting at least one print data selected by the user from the list of print data displayed on the display panel from the information processing apparatus to the printer; a control step of controlling the printer to perform the printing of the print data transmitted in said third transmission step after confirming that a print charge for printing the selected print data is paid; a checking step of checking whether it is a specific time specified by the user; a determination step of determining, in accordance with checking that it is the specific time specified by the user, whether each of the print data stored by the information processing apparatus should be deleted in accordance with a specific condition; and a deletion step of deleting, if there is stored print data which should be deleted, the stored print data which should be deleted.

Amended Claim 11 is directed to a method corresponding to Claim 1.

Amended Claims 21 and 22 are directed to a computer program corresponding to claims 11 and 16, respectively.

Accordingly, a printer controller in accordance with Claims 1 or 16 has the following features:

(1) The printer controller displays a list of print data corresponding to authentication information input by a user, and controls printing of the print data selected from the list. Thus, it is possible to prevent print data of a certain user from being erroneously printed according to an instruction from another user. Moreover, it is possible for a user to confirm through the list what kinds of print data have been stored as print data corresponding to the user in a storage unit of the printer controller.

(2) The printer controller determines whether each of the print data stored in the storage unit should be deleted in accordance with a specific condition. Then, if there is print data which should be deleted, the relevant print data is deleted. Thus, it is possible to prevent that the print data from being continuously stored in the storage unit uselessly. In the specification, elapsing of a predetermined time from a print data reception time is cited as an example of the specific condition.

(3) The printer controller checks whether it is a specific time specified by the user, and executes the above determination (2) in accordance with checking that it is the specific time specified by the user. Thus, it is possible to continuously execute the above determination (2). For example, if a time zone that the printer controller is not frequently used in is designated as the specific time, it is possible to execute the above determination (2) in the time zone that the printer controller is not frequently used.

Applicant submits that Arledge, Mori, Reifman and Taniguchi, taken either alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest all of the features of the present invention. Specifically, the cited references fail to disclose or suggest checking whether it

is a specific time specified by the user and determining, in accordance with checking that it is the specific time specified by the user, whether each of the print data stored in said storage unit should be deleted in accordance with a specific condition.

In regard to Arledge, Alredge discloses that if a new order has not been processed within a predetermined time duration, the new order is automatically deleted from the system. Therefore, the retailer must always monitor the new orders, because if the retailer fails to take action on a new order before the predetermined duration expires, the order will be automatically deleted from the system. In the Office Action, it is admitted that Alredge fails to disclose deleting a job at a user specified time.

Turning now to Mori, Mori fails to disclose or suggest determining, in accordance with checking that it is the specific time specified by the user, whether each of the print data stored in said storage unit should be deleted in accordance with a specific condition. Instead, Mori discloses a print monitor process that includes a delete determination step S640 that is dependent on the lack of a printer command being received at step S610. That is, Mori has to always execute the step of S640 if there is no command from a printer.

Referring now to Fig. 10 of Mori, a computer first determines at step S660 whether there is a job in which a predetermined delete time has passed. Then, if there is the job in which the predetermined delete time has passed, the computer notifies the printer that the relevant job is deleted at step S670. Subsequently, in step S610, if there is a command from the printer, the computer determines in step S620 whether or not the relevant command is a notification of delete confirmation. If the relevant command is the notification of delete confirmation in step S620, a “delete” flag is set for the relevant job in

step S630. On the other hand, in step S610, if there is no command from the printer, the computer executes the determination of S640 to determine on which job the delete flag is set, and the relevant job is deleted in step S650.

While Mori may disclose deleting a job, Mori fails to disclose or suggest that the determination process (corresponding to step S660 of Fig. 10 in Mori) for determining whether there is the print data to be deleted, is executed in accordance with checking that it is the specific time specified by the user. That is, Mori has to always execute steps S660 through steps S640 if there is no command from the printer. Furthermore, even if step S640 is considered as a determination as to whether it is the specific time specified by the user (which is not conceded by Applicant), it is apparent in Mori that the determination in step S660 is not executed based on the determination result of step S640.

In contrast to the print monitor process in Fig. 10 of Mori but in accordance with the present invention as recited in amended independent Claim 1, it is possible for the user to designate the time when executing the determination. Thus, since it is determined at the designated time whether there is the data to be deleted, it is possible to prevent the process of the above-referenced feature (2) from continuing, whereby it is possible to reduce a load of the process on the resources of the print controller. Furthermore, it is possible for the user to execute the process of the above-referenced feature (2) by designating a proper time zone in which the printer controller is not frequently used.

Applicant has reviewed Reifman and Taniguchi and submits that nothing is found in these references that cure the deficiencies in Alredge and Mori. In light of the deficiencies of the cited references as discussed above, Applicant submits that amended

independent Claims 1, 11, 16 and 21 to 24 are now in condition for allowance and respectfully requests same.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed allowable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the allowability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

CONCLUSION

No claim fees are believed due; however, should it be determined that additional claim fees are required, the Director is hereby authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account 50-3939.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, CA office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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